

Message Text

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13/47

ACTION EUR-08

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P R 151834Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8350

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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LIMDIS

CORRECTED COPY- E.O. TAGS, SUBJECT, AND REF, ADDED.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MASS, XF, UK

SUBJECT: ADVISORY ROLES OF THE UK AND CERTAIN OTHER
COUNTRIES IN DEFENSE/SECURITY FIELD IN PERSIAN GULF
STATES

REF: STATE 29563; STATE A-74; KUWAIT 671; AMMAN 1060

SUMMARY: WE AGREE WITH MOST CONCLUSIONS OF INSPECTORS'
REPORT, IN PARTICULAR RECOMMENDATION 18. WE THINK RESI-
DUAL BRITISH INFLUENCE IN GULF IS WELL WORTH OUR CONTI-
NUING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF, WHILE WE PHASE IN MORE U.S.
(AND OTHER FRIENDLY) INFLUENCE AT GRADUAL TEMPO SUITING

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THE DESIRES OF WARY LOCAL REGIMES AND AVOIDING ANY AP-

PEARANCE OF TRYING TO SHOULDER OUR BRITISH ALLIES ASIDE. BRITISH WILL NOT BE EASILY SHOULDERED ASIDE, AND IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO US LONG-TERM POLICY FOR US TO TRY IT. WE RECOGNIZE KUWAIT IS PROBABLY A SPECIAL CASE COMPARED TO REST OF SMALL GULF STATES, BUT WHAT WE DO THERE WILL AFFECT OUR IMAGE THROUGHOUT THE AREA. END SUMMARY

1. WE AGREE WITH MOST CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXCELLENT INSPECTION REPORT. SPECIFIC DATA ON PRESENCE OF BRITISH IN AREA OF THE GULF AND BROADER ARABIAN PENINSULA WAS PROVIDED TO INSPECTORS LIVINGSTON AND WILEY WHEN THEY VISITED LONDON. UPDATED LIST IS REGULARLY GIVEN DEPARTMENT AT US-UK TALKS WHICH TAKE PLACE ANNUALLY EVERY FALL. THIS POST WILL CONTINUE TO BE ALERT TO IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE CHARACTER OR LEVEL OF BRITISH PRESENCE IN ANY PARTICULAR STATE, WHICH IS NORMALLY REPORTED TO DEPARTMENT BY BRITISH EMBASSY WASHINGTON ANYWAY, AND WHICH OUR AREA MISSIONS ARE LIKELY TO PERCEIVE AND REPORT AS WELL.

2. ON MORE GENERAL QUESTION OF BRITISH PRESENCE WE THINK INSPECTION TEAM WAS GUIDED BY REALISTIC CONSIDERATIONS. BRITISH MAINTAIN AN IMPORTANT RESIDUAL PRESENCE IN MINISTRIES, SECURITY SERVICES, AND COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE SMALLER GULF STATES AND OMAN, JUST AS USG HAS MORE IMPORTANT PRESENCE IN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. ALL COUNTRIES IN THE AREA ARE AT PRESENT DRIVEN BY TWO AIMS: (A) ARABIZATION (PREFERABLY LOCAL) OF TASKS PERFORMED BY WESTERNERS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, AND (B) GREATER DIVERSIFICATION OF WESTERN ADVISORS, ARMS SUPPLIERS, AND COMMERCIAL LINKS TO THE EXTENT ARABIZATION IS NOT YET FEASIBLE.

3. SINCE UK DROPPED ITS FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE OF THE FORMER TRUCIAL STATES AND OMAN, BRITISH INFLUENCE HAS GROWN IN ABSOLUTE TERMS IN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA--EVEN THOUGH IN RELATIVE TERMS U.S. MAINTAINS ITS LEAD. ON THE OTHER HAND, U.S. INFLUENCE (AND THAT OF OTHERS SUCH AS THE FRENCH) HAS GROWN IN FORMER BRITISH PROTECTORATES (UAE, BAHRAIN, QATAR, OMAN) THOUGH IT IS RELATIVELY STILL WELL BEHIND THE BRITISH.

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TISH.

4. WE WOULD EXPECT THESE TRENDS TO CONTINUE AS LONG AS HOST GOVERNMENTS MAINTAIN THEIR DOUBLE INTEREST IN ARABIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF WESTERN TIES. IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT (NOR EASILY FEASIBLE) FOR U.S. TO ATTEMPT SPEEDING THE INEVITABLE REDUCTION OF BRITISH PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN ORDER TO SUPPLANT IT. BY SAME TOKEN IT WOULD

BE FOOLISH FOR USG NOT TO CONTINUE TO PROFIT FROM BRITISH WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE IN PRESERVING THE SECURITY AND LONG-TERM STABILITY OF THESE (FOR THE MOST PART) NEW STATES WITH THE CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES THAT THE BRITISH ARE BOUND TO POSSESS FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

5. THERE IS OF COURSE A FURTHER ARGUMENT FOR CONTINUING RELIANCE ON THE BRITISH (AND SUPPORT OF ARABIZATION OR

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DIVERSIFICATION INVOLVING FRIENDLY INFLUENCES SUCH AS THAT OF JORDAN OR IRAN); THE ADVANTAGE OF KEEPING THE SOVIETS OUT OF THE AREA AS LONG AS FEASIBLE. HAPPILY, GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA ARE NOT INCLINED TO EXPLORE THE SOVIET OPTION AT THIS TIME. THERE IS ROOM FOR GREATER U.S. PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE. BUT IF THIS IS THRUST ON GULF STATES FASTER THAN THEY ASK FOR IT, THEY MIGHT EASILY

MISTAKE IT FOR ANOTHER POTENTIAL THREAT TO THEIR SECURITY--AND LOOK AROUND FOR A COUNTERVAILING PRESENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

6. AS ADDRESSEES WILL HAVE NOTICED, THERE HAS BEEN A DECREASE IN THE MANIFESTATION OF TRADITIONAL ANTAGONISM BETWEEN IRAN AND ARAB STATES. DEPARTURE OF BRITISH PROTECTING POWER PROBABLY HAD A GOOD DEAL TO DO WITH THE ARAB GULF STATES' APPRECIATION THAT THEY WILL NEED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND OUGHT TO CULTIVATE GOOD RELATIONS
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WITH A POWERFUL NEIGHBOR SUCH AS IRAN. IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF THESE STATES (E.G., OMAN) CONSIDER SAUDI ARABIA A GREATER LONG-TERM THREAT (PARTICULARLY SHOULD A RADICAL REGIME EVENTUALLY GAIN POWER THERE) THAN THE SHAH'S IRAN. UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS OF RELATIVE UNCERTAINTY AMONG THE AREA'S TRADITIONAL RULERS, ANY DISARRAY IN WESTERN PRESENCE IN THE AREA MIGHT ONLY ENCOURAGE MORE ADVENTUROUS RADICAL ELEMENTS AND THUS INCREASE THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION FROM TROUBLEMAKERS SUPPORTED BY PDRY OR IRAQ. HERE TOO, THE REDUCED AND FADING INFLUENCE OF THE BRITISH BUYS TIME FOR NEW STATES TO OVERCOME INITIAL INSECURITIES AND LEARN TO APPRECIATE U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE RESTRAINED TERMS THAT USG (UNDER ITS OWN DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS) OFFERS IT.

7. WE RECOGNIZE KUWAIT'S CASE IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT (KUWAIT REFTEL) IN THAT KUWAIT:

(A) IS LONGER ESTABLISHED THAN MOST OTHER SMALL GULF STATES AND THEREFORE HAS GREATER EXPERIENCE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD;

(B) FACES A SPECIFIC EXTERNAL THREAT FROM IRAQ WHICH IT HAS TRIED TO BALANCE OFF IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, INCLUDING SOME GINGERLY DEALINGS WITH IRAN;

(C) HAS A GOVERNMENT WHICH APPEARS TO DESIRE DIRECT USG SUPPORT (THOUGH CHALLENGES TO LONG-TERM ASCENDANCY OF THIS GOVERNMENT ARE PERHAPS MORE OBVIOUS IN KUWAIT THAN ELSEWHERE); AND

(D) HAS NOT EXPERIENCED REDUCTION OF BRITISH INFLUENCE, BUT ON THE CONTRARY PROBABLY PROVIDES A RICH ENOUGH PRIZE (IN TERMS OF ITS OIL WEALTH) TO TEMPT BRITISH TO HANG ON TO THEIR INFLUENCE AND PRESENCE THERE TOOTH AND NAIL AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AGAINST ALL COMERS.

MORE DETERMINED USG PENETRATION OF THE ARMS SALES AND

OTHER COMMERCIAL MARKETS IN KUWAIT MAKES SENSE. HOWEVER,
THIS HAS TO BE DONE CAUTIOUSLY AND WITH THE DISTINCTION
BETWEEN KUWAIT AND OTHER SMALL AREA STATES WELL IN MIND.

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ANY EXPANSION OF USG INFLUENCE CARRIED ON IN AN OVERTLY
AGGRESSIVE MANNER, AND WITH THE APPEARANCE OF SHOULDERING
GOOD WESTERN ALLIES SUCH AS THE BRITISH OUT OF THE WAY,
WOULD ONLY REDOUND AGAINST U.S. AND WESTERN INTERESTS IN
THE OTHER STATES OF THE AREA. SPIERS

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